

## COLORED SOLDIERS.

## EXPERIMENT OF ENLISTING THEM IN THE SOUTH.

Brief Experience of a Confederate Recruiting Officer—General Lee's Ideas Regarding Negro Troops—The Policy Adopted Too Late to be Tested.

(For the Times.)

Mr. Edmond Spencer's paper in the Philadelphia Times revives memory of the fact, which had previously received no notice at the hands of historians, that the Confederate Government inaugurated during the last weeks of its existence a bureau for the enlistment of colored troops. The utilization of the negro element for military purposes had long before been urged by some of the most prominent officers of the Southern army; but the civil authorities were averse to an experiment so apparently inconsistent with the system of slavery, and so likely to encounter the opposition of a large class of the soldiery. It was not until Mr. Davis' faith in foreign interference had been rudely disturbed by the change of policy in England, and by events in Mexico, and every other expedient for prolonging the struggle had been exhausted, that Congress consented to deal seriously with the subjects and the signal gun for recruitment of 1865 had already been fired when the President approved an act for the recruiting of negro troops. It was a tardy recognition of the truth which Mr. Lincoln had long before proclaimed in his speech, that in a war for existence no resource of strength can be more neglected. While arrangements were yet incomplete for carrying the law into execution, Grant was forming the columns which, under Sheridan, in the forests of Dinwiddie, put an end to the siege of Petersburg, and Sherman was already thundering with relentless speed along the last avenue of supply to which the Confederate army in Virginia might look for sustenance.

## THE MEN FAVORABLE.

To the men in the trenches the proposition to arm the slaves was received with a calmness that must have surprised the politicians. Ere these overworn veterans had learned to despise no aid in the task that grew daily to wear the hue of hopeless effort. Pride of opinion and the preoccupation of habit were ready now to be sacrificed upon the altar of necessity, and though these Confederate philosophers had never heard of Miles O'Reilly, at a hundred camp-fires one might hear expressed by some laudable vidente the sensible logic that the Irish poet had conveyed in easy rhyme to the Army of the Potomac:

"Every day in the rear, boys,

And every hour in the day,

I'd save Sambo to be shot at me,

Every hour in the day."

But Sambo was destined to escape the perils and vicissitudes of war.

## SUMMONED TO GENERAL LEE.

On the 22d of March, 1865, the writer, then a staff officer in A. P. Hill's corps, was seated in front of a log cabin on the Bermuda front, intent upon the deaf ingenuity with which Captain Ludlow, of the Sixth Virginia, was converting an army blanket into the recognizable likeness of a pair of breeches. The progress of the metamorphosis was exciting indeed critical merriment, when a courier approached, and delivered to one of the party an order which effectively terminated his interest in the pantaloons business.

## OFFICE ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR-GENERAL, HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VA.

March 23d, 1865.

Unless something special is going on in your front, you will, upon receipt of this report, promptly at these headquarters. General Lee desires to see you. Yours respectfully,

H. E. PEYTON, Colonel and A. L. G.

as brief as peculiar. Headquarters were established upon the main thoroughfare of the besieged city, and a flag was ostentatiously displayed from the window; in short, we entered zealously upon the work, and met with some encouragement. There are figures now in Petersburg, as leading Republican politicians, several respectable colored men, to whom I imagine there would be little pleasure in being reminded of the alacrity with which they offered to don the gray of the rebellion. The free negroes were universally in favor of the scheme, and made haste to prefer their influence and aid. On several occasions since then, listening to the loyal fervor with which one or two of this class have denounced the Confederacy and all who gave it comfort, I have been tempted to resurrect this reminiscence and to let the League know what small chance hindered their leaders from falling under the same ban: but I have forbore. One of them sometimes shaves me now, and no doubt is the more tender with my beard because the treasonable proclivities of that day have been allowed to drop into oblivion. The master roll is in existence now, and, with due provocation, may yet be published.

## PURCHASE-MONEY SUBSCRIBED.

Among the merchants and capitalists there was a general readiness to respond liberally, and a large sum was subscribed to be applied to the purchase of recruits. In two days upwards of a million of dollars was pledged to further the work. But it was General Lee who forbade, too late, the preliminary arrangements had scarcely been made when Sambo was called to quite another destiny than that of fighting for his master's freedom to secure his own.

Only one short week ago, my colleagues who had been engaged in the line up to the hilt had been compelled to fight it out, "if it's got to be," all summer, when we were furnished with imperative reasons for a change of base. On Sunday morning, April 2d, news came of the defeat at Five Forks and of the breach by the enemy of the defenses of Petersburg. By breakfast time the Federal shell, directed at burning warehouses, were whistling and bursting about the recruiting office, and a little later the recruiting officers received orders to rejoin their commands at the front.

## THE DEFEAT AT RUMSON.

The circumstances were exigent, and we resolved I am given to confess in bad odor, leaving behind the names under which it was known that emancipation was to be applied to the slave population, to the extent of which A. P. Hill's corps, A. T. Mac-Attrete would have marched for liberty, and the fiery proclamations which were intended for distribution throughout Virginia and Eastern Carolina. A day later the Union forces entering triumphantly the city, captured these evidences of our valiancy to fight the devil with fire, and a newspaper which was afterwards issued as a Federal soldier in Petersburg, much ridicule was expended upon the defunct but mean and those who had conducted it. Returning to Petersburg, subsequent to the surrender, Sergeant Brittain and the writer came in as a share of notoriety as unpleasant as unexpected, and many years afterward, when in a political speech I twisted an opponent with having first entered this country at the head of a negro brigade, I was astounded to find from his prompt and decisive retort that my career as a recruiting officer was still remembered. Not a man was left in the field, but we were doing our best to get them there.

## CHANCES OF SUCCESS.

There was not time left over to form an exact judgment of the chances of success. I am inclined to think, however, that the body of the slave population, which had received the privilege of parting with their slaves without compensation. That a large number of negroes would have accepted service on the preferred terms I have never doubted.

Could they have been made soldiers off? All my observation of the race furnishes reason to answer affirmatively. I only saw General Lee once after the war, and I then asked him this question. His reply was such as to convey the impression that he counted the failure to make military use of this element directly that emancipation was decreed by the North, one of the most serious mistakes of the Southern policy. That he urged the experiments months before the action of Congress is a conceded fact. General Lee's idea was to use the negroes in the trenches and to mobilize the main force of his veterans for service in the field and on the flanks of the enemy.

A. A. G.

## BASE-BALL AT THE UNIVERSITY.

Preparing for the Season—Personnel of the Team—Good Ball to Be Played.

(For the Times.)

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, Feb. 28.—Now that the majority of the intermediate examinations are over, the all-absorbing topic in college is base-ball, the chances for a good team, &c., so you correspondent thought that it would not be uninteresting to the friends of the University who take an interest in athletic sports for them to know what efforts are being made to sustain the brilliant records made by the Varsity's representatives in the base-ball arena for the past two sessions.

Only four members of last season's team are present at college this session, Addison Greenway, Thurman McGuire and Schley and it is probable that Greenway and Thurman will not participate in any games on account of their degree. Schley, who did such creditable work, has been made a member of the faculty having put a step to their field exertions, which has been kept up for the past month. Most of the men show up well in this practice, and although not star players, they give evidence of doing good, honest work, which is the kind that wins games.

There are about thirty applicants for the team, who have been at work in gymnasium and outdoor exercises under the instruction of Mr. S. M. Beard, whose object it is to get the men in as thorough physical condition as possible in time for regular diamond practice. The men also go to the practice on the diamond whenever the weather permits, the faculty having put a step to their field exertions, which has been kept up for the past month. Most of the men show up well in this practice, and although not star players, they give evidence of doing good, honest work, which is the kind that wins games.

McGuire, who is also chairman of the baseball committee, in an interview commenting on the prospects of a good showing by the team this year, said they were very good.

The committee has also made arrangements with the Boston League to play a series of games here on their Southern trip. Of course the games will be one-sided, but the practice will be greatly beneficial to the Varsity team. A number of games with Northern and Southern colleges have been arranged.

The game between the slaves and the white people took place on the 2d of January, 1865, at Richmond, and to be away over those hills, where boldness of strategy, and severity of maneuver, might find play. "The game has come when to meet these people must lay hold on every element of strength within our grasp." Congress has finally authorized the enlistment of colored soldiers. We need this reinforcement, now, and the work of raising the first full regiment, a young man who is not afraid of a little trouble and who has no preconceived notions to overcome."

## GENERAL LEE'S PLAN.

General Lee then went on to confirm the plan, dwelling upon his conviction that the colored people in Virginia would, in their own interest throughout the war, attach themselves to the South, and could readily be induced by offers of ultimate freedom for themselves and their immediate families to take up arms in behalf of the cause of their masters.

He trusted also confidently to the patriotism of the slaves, aware that the sacrifice of their property to a master who had lied of their own flesh and blood, and caused the easy collection of a large recruiting fund with which negroes who were willing to enter the service might be purchased from masters unwilling to part with them otherwise. Finally he said that I had been mentioned to him as a proper person to be entrusted with the partial conduct of this experiment, and he enquired whether I could go into it with a spirit of sympathy with the movement. On being answered in the affirmative, he asked what I thought of the disposition of the officers to command such troops. I replied by alluding to the field for promotion which would be opened up, and added that I was sure every regiment in the army contained many young men of energy and talent, who believed that no body of men could be disciplined into soldiers, and who would eagerly spring to any opportunity of more efficiently serving the cause and of gaining distinction. The General smiled in his grave way, as he remarked, "Well, sir, you will have no objection to this."

## RECRUITING OFFICE OPENED.

It was then settled that I should open an office in Petersburg, with proper authority and facilities, and after an hour's conversation I was dismissed with a gracious, "I shall expect to hear good accounts from you, sir." Leaving the room, before I had reached the door, General Lee had already wheeled again to the window; but I distinctly heard his voice again, turned, thinking that he addressed me, and caught the closing words of his muttered sentence: "If it is not too late." Passing through the yard to regain my horse, I was told of the arrival of Sheridan at the White House, on his way to Petersburg.

## EXPERIENCE.

The end was very poor. General Grant had already written the order for the movements that closed the war. But the next day the necessary papers were issued, and, in company with Sergeant S. W. Britton, who had been assigned to duty with me, I entered upon an experience which was destined to be

## FINANCE AND COMMERCE.

## OPERATIONS OF THE NEW YORK STOCK MARKET.

SITUATION OF TOBACCO AT RICHMOND AND OTHER IMPORTANT CENTRES—QUOTATIONS OF THE NEW YORK AND LIVERPOOL COTTON MARKET—PROVISIONS AND GRAIN.

NEW YORK, Feb. 28.—Money closed at 2 per cent; lowest, 1; highest, 2½. Exchange closed quiet and steady; posted rates, 88½-89; actual rates, 88 for sixty days and 86 for demand. Government closed steady; currency, 6½-10½; 4s, coupons, 12½; 6s, do; 10s, bid.

The market in the last two hours of business was extremely dull. Sales amounted to 6,260 shares; purchases, 1,200; stocks, 1,200; shorts, 1,200; Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis were the most active stocks. The opening prices were unchanged from those of yesterday, shortly after Pacific dropped suddenly from 88½ to 35. A partial recovery was accompanied by the loss. No feature of interest occurred, however. In the closing hour the market was more active. Burlington, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis were the features. They were both sold to a considerable extent and declined steadily. The rest of the stocks remained inactive. At 12:30 the bank statement made its appearance, showing a decrease in the reserves of \$1,420,000. This was a sign for more selling, and the closing prices were generally the lowest of the day. The decline ranged from 3½ to 1½ points.

BID ASKED.

OREGON IRON, first..... 102½-103½

ALABAMA—Class A..... 103½-104½

ALABAMA—Class B..... 104½-105½

LOUISIANA—Common..... 90-91

LIVERPOOL—Cotton..... 95-96

NEW YORK—Cotton..... 125-126

SOUTH CAROLINA—Brown..... 95-96

AMERICAN COCONUT SEED OIL..... 200-210

ATLANTA—Bullion..... 100-101

ATLANTA—Stocks..... 100-101

CANADA—Southern..... 50-51

C. A. O. common..... 18-19

C. A. O. 1st pref..... 51-53

C. A. O. 2d pref..... 53-55

CHICAGO—Cotton..... 95-96

C. & G. Q. 1st pref..... 95-96

DEL. & WESTERN..... 103½-104½

DET. & HAMPSHIRE..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 1st pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 2d pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 3d pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 4th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 5th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 6th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 7th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 8th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 9th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 10th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 11th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 12th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 13th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 14th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 15th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 16th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 17th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 18th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 19th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 20th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 21st pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 22nd pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 23rd pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 24th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 25th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 26th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 27th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 28th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 29th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 30th pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 31st pref..... 103-104

DET. & HAMPSHIRE—Stocks, 32nd pref..... 103-104